

PREVENTING INTENTIONAL INJURY: FROM BULLYING TO HOMICIDE

Youth violence is an ongoing national problem, and except for prominent media coverage of homicides, it is a problem that is largely hidden from public view.

HOW DOES YOUTH VIOLENCE START?

According to a national Attorney General Report, many answers to this question lie with parents and youth themselves. Children and youth who grow up with violence in the home are at greater risk for using violence to solve problems outside of the home. Bullying or other aggressive behavior begun in elementary school often escalates into violence in middle or high school.

TENNESSEE DATA



While overall rates have declined, homicide remains the second leading cause of death for Tennessee teens and young adults. Homicide deaths represent only a fraction of youth physical violence.

- Overall, homicide rates for youth ages 10-24 have declined from 13.9% in 1994 to 9.3% in 2003.
- African-American males ages 10-24 are 15 times more likely to die from homicide than white males.
- Homicide rates are significantly higher among the 20-24 age group (20.2 per 100,000) compared to the 15-19 age group (7.2 per 100,000) and the 10-14 age group (0.7 per 100,000).
- Homicide rates for African-American and white males have declined over the past decade while rates for females have remained steady. Rates for African-American teens have declined sharply since their peak in 1995 of 97.8 per 100,000 to 58.8 per 100,000 in 2003.
- There is a large gap between homicide rates for boys (62.6 per 100,000 in 2003) and girls (9.1 per 100,000 in 2003).
- Tennessee's rate of adolescent firearm deaths (any cause) has remained steady from 1999-2002 except among African-American males ages 20-24. Their rate increased from 102.05 per 100,000 in 1999 to 122.35 per 100,000 in 2002.
- Since 1993, a significant decline has occurred in the percent of high school students who reported carrying weapons on school property (from 18.2% in 1993 to 8% in 2005). High school males (12.7%) were almost four times as likely to engage in such activities as females (3.4%).

BEST PRACTICES



- **Parents** – Parents are their children's first teachers. Raising young children to be adolescents who are able to resolve conflicts peacefully starts by talking to kids about violence and listening to them when disagreements arise.
- **School** – Successful violence prevention programs for teens have several common traits: define aggression broadly; promote a positive school climate; promote social competence through interaction, practice through role-playing and rehearsal; and insist on a climate that will not tolerate bullying, violence or aggression.



- *Sexual Violence* – Successful prevention strategies include prevention education for youth and parents; training for health care professionals and teachers; and implementing intensive programs for youth at higher risk for becoming victims or perpetrators of sexual violence.

PREVENTION PAYS



Youth violence is expensive. Researchers estimate that in Tennessee incurred costs of more than \$3 million per year are related to youth violence.

(Source: Children's Safety Network (CSN) Economics and Insurance Resource Center, at the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation.)

Tips for Talking With Youth About Violence

- Talk with your adolescent: start early, listen, and talk some more
- Monitor the media
- Acknowledge your children's fears and reassure them of their safety
- Take a stand – parents need to be clear and consistent about the values they want to instill
- Control your own behavior
- Set limits regarding children's actions toward others
- Hold family meetings to talk about complaints, share opinions and practice effective problem-solving and negotiation skills
- Convey strict rules about weapons
- Talk about gangs and cliques
- Talk with other parents. Pay particular attention to boys. Ask the schools to get involved. Get additional support and information from professionals.

(Source: Talking with Kids about Violence, Talking with Kids about Tough Issues, www.talkingwithkids.org.)

2010 Objectives

REDUCE HOMICIDE DEATHS

- BY 2010, reduce the homicide rate among adolescents ages 10-14 from a 2003 baseline rate of 0.7 per 100,000 to 0 per 100,000.
- By 2010, reduce the homicide rate among adolescents aged 15-19 from the 2003 baseline rate of 7.2 per 100,000 to 5.2 per 100,000.

- By 2010, reduce the homicide rate among young adults ages 20-24 from the 2003 baseline rate of 20.2 per 100,000 to 16 per 100,000.

REDUCE TEEN VIOLENCE

- By 2010, reduce the proportion of high school students who had been in a physical fight in the last 12 months from a 2005 baseline of 31% to 26%.
- By 2010, reduce the proportion of high school students who carried a weapon on school property in the last 30 days from a 2005 baseline of 8% to 4.9%.

Websites

Children's Safety Network:
www.childrensafetynetwork.org

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
www.cdc.gov/ncipc

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect
www.calib.com/nccanch

National Crime Prevention Council
www.ncpc.org

National Rape and Sexual Assault Prevention Project
www.acog.org

